

REPORT TO THE TWENTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE
2002 REGULAR SESSION

REQUESTING FURTHER ACTION ON THE
DESIGNATION OF A STATE RECREATIONAL AND HISTORIC PARK
AND NATURE RESERVE AT KAPU'A, HONOMALINO, OKOE, KAULANAMAUNA,
AND MANUKĀ,
DISTRICTS OF SOUTH KONA AND KA'U, ISLAND OF HAWAII



Prepared by:

The Department of Land and Natural Resources

in response to

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 140 Senate Draft 1

Twenty-First Legislature
2001 Regular Session

December 2001

Introduction

The concept for a primitive, wilderness park from Honomalino to Manukā in the districts of South Kona and Ka'u was initially proposed in 1971 by the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs with the support of Bishop Museum. Also in 1971, Senate Resolution (SR) No. 267 was adopted by the State Legislature and called for the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) to conduct a feasibility study for a natural, recreational and historic park consisting of five contiguous *ahupua'a*; Honomalino, Okoe, Kapu'a, Kaulanamauna, and Manukā. Based on the numerous archaeological sites along this coastline, the BLNR approved the concept of a wilderness park, but did not delineate definite park boundaries because of the private ownership of the Kapu'a *ahupua'a* and private inholdings in Honomalino and Okoe. In 1971, surveys of the archaeological and marine resources were completed by Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) staff, but no further action was taken to initiate a park.

In 1983, the Senate of the Twelfth Legislature adopted Senate Resolution No. 65 and appropriated \$50,000 to DLNR to conduct a feasibility study for the park. Responding to this resolution, DLNR's Division of State Parks (State Parks) initiated a suitability study and in 1986, conducted studies of the botanical, wildlife, archaeological, and aquatic resources, as well as the recreational uses of the area. By 1989, the resource studies and recreational assessment had been completed, but DLNR had not compiled a feasibility report or reached a decision on the suitability of establishing a wilderness park in the area.

In 2001, there was renewed interest in creating a State Park and Nature Reserve and the Twenty-First Legislature of 2001, adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) No. 140, S.D. 1, entitled "Requesting Further Action on the designation of a State Recreational and Historic Park and Nature Reserve at Kapu'a, Honomalino, Okoe, Kaulanamauna, and Manukā, Districts of South Kona and Ka'u, Island of Hawai'i" (Appendix 1).

Project Area

The proposed park area runs from the *ahupua'a* of Honomalino in the district of South Kona on the northern end, to the *ahupua'a* of Manukā in the district of Ka'u on the southern end. As proposed in 1971, the park encompassed a total of 22,000 acres within the five *ahupua'a* (Appendix 2). In 1986, a smaller land area in Kapu'a was included in the park. The proposed park is situated along the coastline where there is a concentration of archaeological sites, a series of trails, and existing recreational use. The shoreline is undeveloped with the exception of several private houselots in Honomalino and Okoe. The area is marked by an *a'a* lava flow surrounding several coastal *kipuka* and shoreline anchialine pools. *Kiawe* is dominant along the shoreline while the *kipuka* are characterized as scrublands or grasslands.

Honomalino: State-owned land from the shoreline to 1,750 feet inland. Shoreline consists of a steeply sloping black sand beach with a foot trail from Miloli'i. Along the shoreline are two private inholdings containing beach houses. Along with Okoe, this section of the proposed park encompasses 1,458 acres.

Okoe: From the shoreline to 6,000 feet inland. A small black sand beach

surrounds Okoe Bay. One privately owned *kuleana* lot with a house is located near the bay.

Kapu'a	A 4.5 mile long by 0.5 mile wide coastal strip incorporating about 425 acres. This strip corresponds to the lands within the Conservation District. There are four small white sand beaches lined with <i>kiawe</i> trees. This <i>ahupua'a</i> is privately owned.
Kaulanamauna	From the shoreline to almost 2 miles inland to the Forest Reserve boundary and includes about 870 acres of this narrow <i>ahupua'a</i> .
Manukā	This is the largest <i>ahupua'a</i> in the proposed park and would encompass an area of 6.5 miles along the coastline and from the shoreline to 3.5 miles inland, a total of 11,810 acres. Within the proposed park are three <i>kipuka</i> and several anchialine pools. In 1982, the <i>mauka</i> portion of Manukā and Kaulanamauna <i>ahupua'a</i> , above the Belt Highway, were designated a Natural Area Reserve (NAR). The 26,181-acre reserve is also a public hunting area under the jurisdiction of the Division of Forestry and Wildlife.

Status and Existing Conditions

Responding to public pressure, the 1970 Hawaii County Council passed a resolution asking the Navy to cease practice bombings in the Honomalino and Okoe *ahupua'a* that was destroying fishing areas and damaging the terrestrial resources, ancient Hawaiian artifacts and archaeological sites. The issue drew DLNR's attention to the need for controlled access and better management of the resources, including preservation of the significant archaeological sites in the area. This resulted in the 1971 archaeological and marine resources surveys and BLNR approval of the concept of a wilderness park to conserve and protect the natural, scenic, historic and wildlife qualities and to provide non-urban recreational opportunities for the public's inspiration and benefit.

Feasibility Study in the 1980s

With the adoption of S.R. No. 65 and the appropriation of \$50,000 in 1983, State Parks initiated an updated and more comprehensive feasibility study in 1986. Some of these studies were conducted by DLNR staff, while others were conducted by consultants.

Aquatic Resources. In 1986, DLNR's Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) completed an updated survey of the marine resources along the coastline and analyzed the potential for fishing activities in certain areas. Favorable fishing areas were identified at Honomalino Bay, Kanewa'a, Manukā Bay, Kaiakekua, and Keawaiki. The coastal area from Okoe Bay to Kapu'a Bay indicated a low potential for fishing but was noted as good for swimming.

Anchialine Pools. The assessment by the University of Hawai'i at Hilo was not completed until 1995. A total of 20 ponds in Manukā were inventoried and most were found to be in good condition. However, the impacts of human visitation were noted on those closest to the southern boundary of the *ahupua'a*.

Botanical Resources. In 1991, a survey of the botanical resources in the area mapped the plant communities in the proposed park and reported the need for appropriate management of terrestrial botanical resources. The study found that fountain grass has invaded plant communities in the proposed park area. Easily transported by humans and their activities, on vehicles, clothing, shoes, as well as feral animals, fountain grass was the major plant management concern in the region of the proposed park and the adjacent Manukā NAR.

Wildlife Resources. DOFAW wildlife biologists reported a goat herd in 1982.

Archaeological Resources. State Parks archaeologists updated information on the archaeological sites previously located in 1971 by documenting existing site condition, identifying changes since 1971, and noting any impacts or threats to the sites. The archaeological survey also included mapping and photographing to evaluate the research and interpretive potential of the sites within the context of a historical park. Many of the archaeological sites occur along the coast and the shoreline trails, indicating a concentration of settlement around the bay areas for ocean use and transportation. The archaeological sites include numerous platforms believed to be housesites, a *holua* slide, *heiau*, and modified lava tubes.

Recreational Resources. A State Parks planner conducted an inventory of the recreational use of the area and identified mostly camping and fishing activities along the small bays of Honomalino, Okoe, and Kapu'a. Fishermen also use the rocky sea cliffs at Kaulanamauna and Manukā. Unimproved roads provide access from the highway to the shoreline, albeit limited to four wheel drive vehicles, through Okoe, Kapu'a, and Kaulanamauna. The lack of fresh water is another limitation for recreation.

Trails. The *mauka-makai* trails were historically used for hunting, gathering, and religious purposes. The Okoe-Kapu'a Trail, the Pu'u Hinahina Bay Trail, the Kaupo Bay Trail, and the Niuou Bay Trail were all used extensively by native Hawaiians from the late 1800s and continued on a regular basis to access the *mauka* areas for hunting and gathering purposes until the late 1980s.

In 1992, Congress included the Ala Kahakai or Trail by the Sea in the National Trails System. The around the island shoreline footpath called *ala loa* (long trail) served as the major land route that connected 600 communities of the island kingdom from 1400-1700 A.D. The story of Hawaiian settlement, linking the natural, cultural resources, historic events, sites, spiritual and sacred values, as well as trade and commerce, can be told along the Ala Kahakai. Portions of the trails along the coastline are within the proposed park boundaries.

Access and Infrastructure

Access to the proposed park is limited to several *mauka-makai* dirt roads running toward the shoreline from the Belt Highway. These jeep roads provide access to the ocean for recreational fishing, which usually involves overnight camping along the shoreline.

Okoe: A gated jeep road through private property allows vehicle access to the shoreline at Honomalino and Okoe. Pedestrian traffic is also possible on the foot trail from Miloli'i.

Kaulanamauna: A jeep road runs the length of *ahupua'a* from the Belt Highway to the shoreline where it intersects the coastal road. This road was recently improved by NARS.

Manukā: The Road to the Sea runs through private property in the adjacent *ahupua'a* of Kahuku from the Belt Highway to the shoreline. At the Manukā-Kahuku boundary, a short jeep trail, about 0.8 miles long, enters Manukā and leads to the Kaheawai Trail. The NAR's *makai* boundary corresponds to the coastal jeep road which allows for the continued use of the areas for fishing and camping.

There are currently no improvements or public facilities, such as parking areas or restrooms, to accommodate public use of the proposed park area. There are no sources of fresh water.

Land Use at Kapu'a

In 1985, the State Land Use Commission (SLUC) approved reclassification for a 6,039-acre section of the private lands owned by Farms of Kapua, Ltd. from Conservation to Agriculture, retaining a 63 acre coastal portion in the Conservation District. The landowner planned to develop multi-agricultural use of the lands at Kapu'a. In 1989, the SLUC amended its earlier decision to address the potential adverse impacts that agricultural and aquacultural development may have on the archaeological and cultural sites that were concentrated in the coastal area. The SLUC required that the southwest portion of the property to a parallel inland boundary with a depth of 2,000 feet from the certified shoreline and consisting of not less than 478 acres remain in the Conservation District. The amended decision also recognized the concept of a wilderness park by providing access along the shoreline, linking the publicly owned areas to both sides of Kapu'a, and maintaining the open, scenic, natural character along the shoreline from Honomalino to Manukā. The *ahupua'a* of Kapu'a remains privately owned and subject to development, although no development has occurred since the SLUC amendment. In the park planning, the proposed park corresponds to the Conservation District boundary (Appendix 4).

Manukā Natural Area Reserve

When the park was originally proposed, the Manukā NAR had not been identified. Established in 1983, the Manukā NAR encompasses 25,550 acres and is the largest reserve in the State's system (Appendix 3). This reserve extends from sea level to 5,000 feet in elevation, includes both the Manukā and Kaulanamauna *ahupua'a*, and surrounds Manukā State Wayside. Excluded from the reserve is a coastal strip and the two large coastal *kīpuka*. Because NAR's rules prohibit camping, this exclusion allows for the continued use of the shoreline for camping associated with overnight fishing. As a result, the wilderness park under the jurisdiction of the Division of State Parks would be limited to this narrow coastal strip. However, the designation of a reserve will maintain the wilderness character of the area and allow for public's use of the area for hiking.

Issues and Recommendations

On October 26, 2001, State Parks convened a meeting of interested parties to discuss the wilderness park concept. Held at Miloli'i, the meeting included representatives from Pa'a Pono Miloli'i, The Trust for Public Land (TPL), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and residents from the community of Miloli'i. These representatives were invited to meet with DLNR, including staff from the Divisions of Aquatic Resources (DAR), Forestry and Wildlife's Na Ala Hele Trails and Access System (NAH) and Natural Area Reserves System (NARS), Historic Preservation, and State Parks. The topics of discussion and the concerns raised at the meeting are summarized in Appendix 5.

The process for designating an area as a park takes time. In the thirty years that have passed since the wilderness park was first conceived, the impacts of recreational use on the resources have become increasingly evident. A determination on the feasibility for creating a park needs to be made followed by a look at sources of funding for acquisition if the park is to include the private lands in Honomalino and Kapu'a. There are questions regarding the appropriateness of a park designation for the area. Once an area is called a park, more people use the area and its resources. The proposal for a wilderness area from Honomalino to Manukā emphasizes the coastal resources and the current recreational use of the shoreline that is under the State's ownership for most of the coastal area.

One of the characteristics of a wilderness park is limited access. *Mauka-makai* access is currently restricted with unimpeded, unimproved lateral access along the coast. Depending on where people enter the park, access could be controlled. Vehicle access is currently through Miloli'i and when the park designation is made, there is certain to be a greater impact on this community.

An alternative to management of the area by State Parks could involve a private conservation group, such as The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Their mission is to preserve the plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on earth and in Hawai'i, to protect the native forests and their inherent biological values. In the establishment of nature preserves to manage such areas, TNC seeks to develop a model for sustainable forest resources and to enable other landowners to maintain the biological and economic values for their lands.

TNC recently purchased an additional 1,800 acres in Kapu'a adjacent to its Honomalino Preserve with a donation from the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program of almost one-half of the purchase price of \$1 million. This voluntary program was established to help landowners protect forested lands from conversion into non-forest uses, such as pasture or subdivisions. Called the Kona Hema Preserve, TNC has expanded the protected area to 5,821 acres bringing to 31,000 acres, the forest area now afforded permanent protection in South Kona.

The majority of the preserves they manage are located in *mauka* sections such as forest reserves. However, TNC is developing a coastal marine resources program under which the resource protection issues in Honomalino-Manuka could be considered. As stated by their representative at the October 2001 meeting, it would be to the mutual

benefit of TNC and the State to look at a lease for the area. Although no one from the Land Division was represented at the meeting to address the issue of a lease, the concept for a partnership would be explored.

There are also a number of organizations with non-profit 501(c) status for whom management of this area may be of interest such as Pa'a Pono Miloli'i, whose members are descendants of the Hawaiian families that once owned the lands in Miloli'i, Okoe, and Honomalino. Gilbert Kahele, Pa'a Pono Miloli'i's spokesperson, would like the State to consider the *mauka* boundary of the park to be at least at the 600 foot elevation, although they prefer to have it at 768 feet, the same elevation as Pu'u Nahaha. Their position is to protect the area from development and to have unrestricted access to the inland and marine resources. The community of Miloli'i envisions being stewards for the area.

If the private lands in Honomalino and Kapu'a are to be included in the wilderness park, The Trust for Public Land (TPL) could assist the State in negotiations with the current landowners for a conservation easement, land donation or exchange. In the event these other land transactions are not possible, TPL can assist in identifying funding sources and obtaining funding to purchase the private lands.

To implement a wilderness park along this coastline, additional research must be conducted and various concerns and issues need to be addressed. Critical to the implementation and operation of a wilderness park will be staffing and funding.

1. State Parks' capability to manage and protect the resources in balance with public visitation and greater recreational use of the shoreline. The archaeological and recreational surveys have indicated a correlation between the location of archaeological sites and the areas currently being used for camping and fishing. Use of the archaeological sites for trash, toilets, and firepits has resulted in ongoing damage to the sites and their research potential. A similar problem has been noted with the anchialine ponds. Protection of these resources will require a staff presence from both State Parks and DLNR's Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE).
2. Identifying the carrying capacity of the park based on access and infrastructure. Limited access and lack of fresh water currently limit the use of the area. The wilderness park designation will require provisions for alternate access and limited park facilities for sanitation.
3. Determining visitation patterns based on the sensitivity and significance of the resources. This may include identifying a preferred level of visitation and determining areas where visitation needs to be controlled as a means of protecting the resources.
4. The private inholdings along the coast in Honomalino and Okoe are not consistent with the wilderness park concept and have the potential to disrupt the wilderness character. Alternatives must be identified and evaluated.
5. The area from Honomalino to Manukā must be evaluated relative to other wilderness areas within the State to determine park priorities for acquiring and managing these wilderness areas.

DLNR has determined that the area possesses significant resource values worthy of protection as a State Park. However, because of the numerous issues, constraints, and opportunities that have been identified, further evaluation is needed. Therefore, DLNR has not made any determinations about whether a wilderness park or a nature reserve should be established. As the next step, a working group will be formed to continue discussions and to come up with solutions to these issues, including other management options.

THE SENATE
TWENTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE, 2001
STATE OF HAWAII

S.C.R. NO. 140
S.D. 1

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING FURTHER ACTION ON THE DESIGNATION OF A STATE
RECREATIONAL AND HISTORIC PARK AND NATURE RESERVE AT KAPUA,
HONOMALINO, OKOE, KAULANAMAUNA, AND MANUKA DISTRICTS IN
SOUTH KONA AND KA'U, ISLAND OF HAWAII.

1 WHEREAS, the Senate of the 1971 State Legislature adopted
2 Senate Resolution No. 267, "Requesting the Department of Land
3 and Natural Resources to Authorize the Feasibility Study
4 Relating to the Creation of a State Natural Recreational and
5 Historic Park in the Areas of Kapua or Kauna, Honomalino, Okoe
6 and Manuka in South Kona and Ka'u, Island of Hawaii"; and
7

8 WHEREAS, Senate Resolution No. 267 requested the Department
9 of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to report back to the
10 Senate thirty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session
11 of 1972; and
12

13 WHEREAS, the DLNR Division of State Parks submitted a
14 request to the Board of Land and Natural Resources on
15 December 10, 1971, for approval to create a Honomalino state
16 natural recreational and historic park in this area, and the
17 Division of State Parks cited diverse archaeological findings
18 unearthed during a survey of the area, and stated that many
19 other field trips and studies of the area had been made by the
20 Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, Bishop Museum, Consolidated
21 Clubs of Kona, Mayor and County Council of Hawaii, Hawaii County
22 Planning Department, and Kona Hawaiian Civic Club; and
23

24 WHEREAS, the Division of State Parks cited its desire to
25 create a "primitive type" park which would not require capital
26 improvements but which would provide for controlled access to
27 the park and for the excavation and preservation of some
28 archaeological sites; and
29

30 WHEREAS, the area of the proposed state park is state
31 conservation land with the exception of a portion owned by a
32 private entity; and

1
2 WHEREAS, the Board of Land and Natural Resources, during
3 its board meeting of December 10, 1971, voted unanimously for
4 adoption of the concept of a primitive-type park in the general
5 location shown on the map attached to the Division of State
6 Parks submittal; and
7

8 WHEREAS, no further action has been taken since 1971; now,
9 therefore,
10

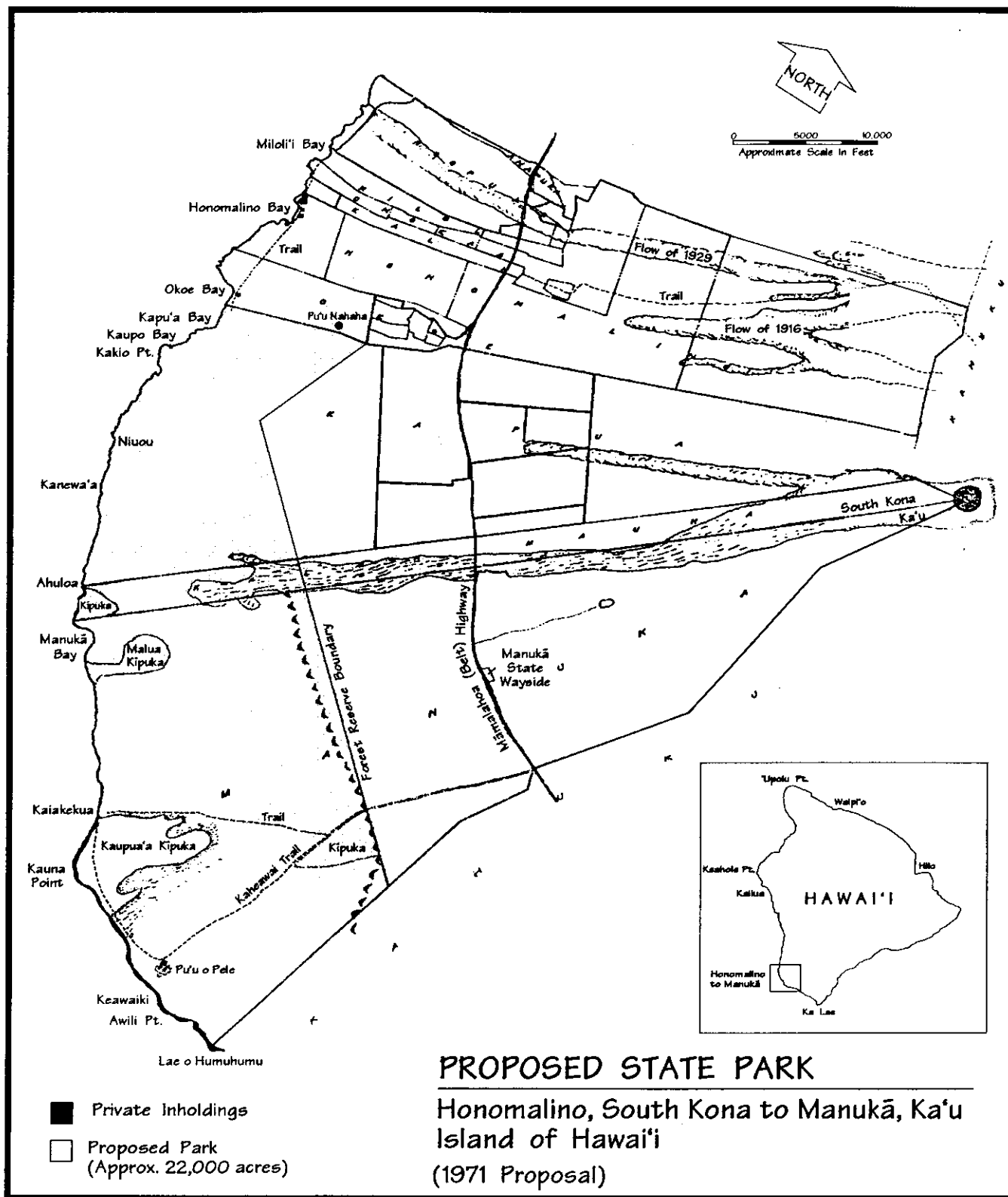
11 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-First
12 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2001, the
13 House of Representatives concurring, that DLNR (through the
14 divisions of State Historic Preservation, Aquatic Resources, and
15 State Parks, and the Na Ala Hele program) is requested to work
16 with Pa'a Pono Milolii, a community grassroots organization
17 composed of descendants and current residents of the subject
18 area, and any other interested parties, to renew the plan to
19 create a state park and nature reserve with minimum improvements
20 but preserving the significant archeological sites in the area;
21 and
22

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DLNR invite the private Trust
24 for Public Land to investigate the possibility of obtaining a
25 donation or purchase of either fee interest, conservation
26 easement or similar instrument for portions of the private Kapua
27 lands desirable for inclusion into the proposed park; and
28

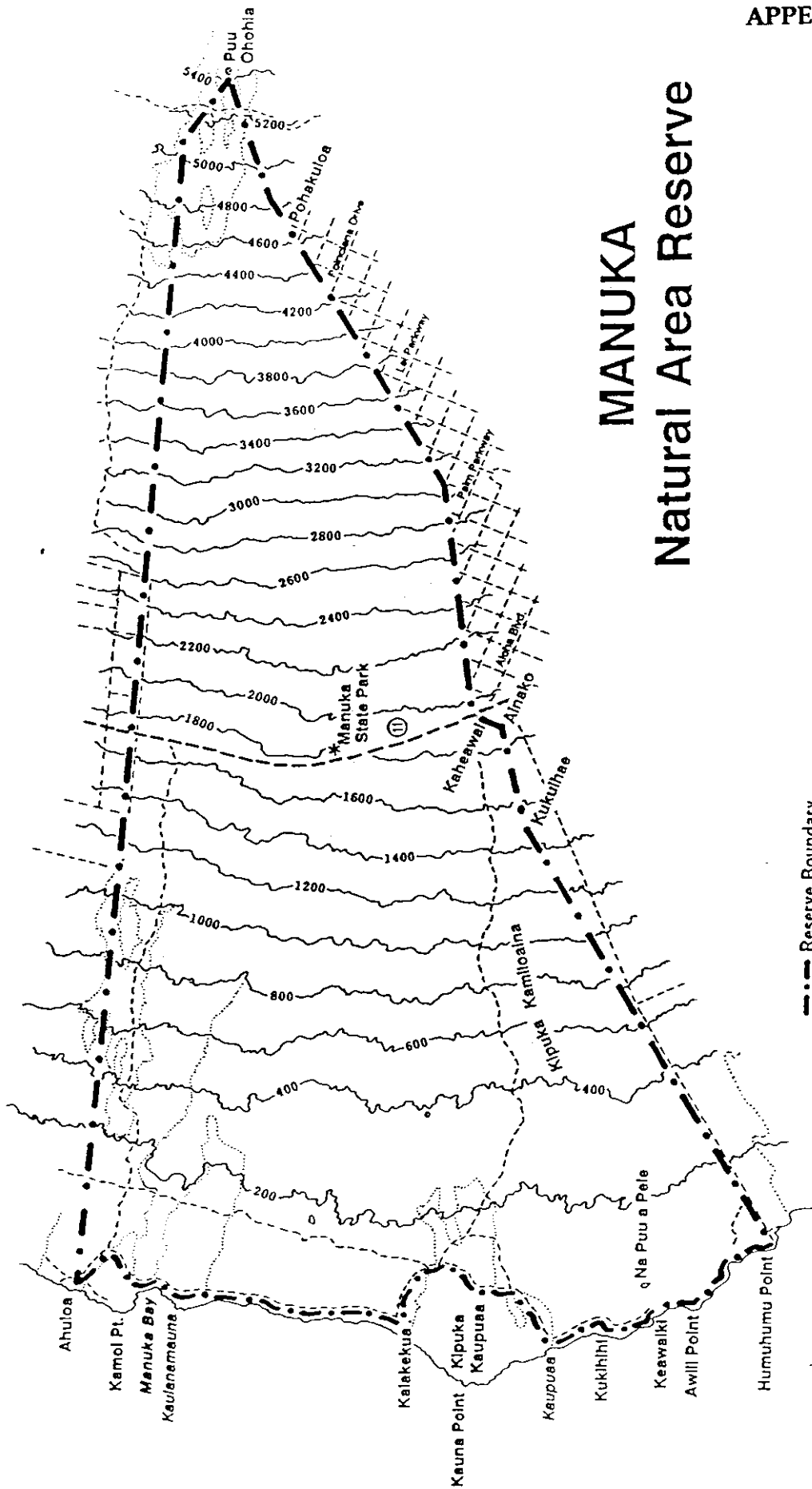
29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DLNR submit a report to the
30 Legislature on its progress in developing the Honomalino state
31 park and nature reserve thirty days prior to the convening of
32 the Regular Session of 2002; and
33

34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
35 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Senate
36 President, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mayor of
37 Hawaii County, the Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural
38 Resources, administrators of the State Historic Preservation
39 Division, State Parks Division, Na Ala Hele program, and Aquatic
40 Resources Division, Pa'a Pono Milolii, and the Trust for Public
41 Land.

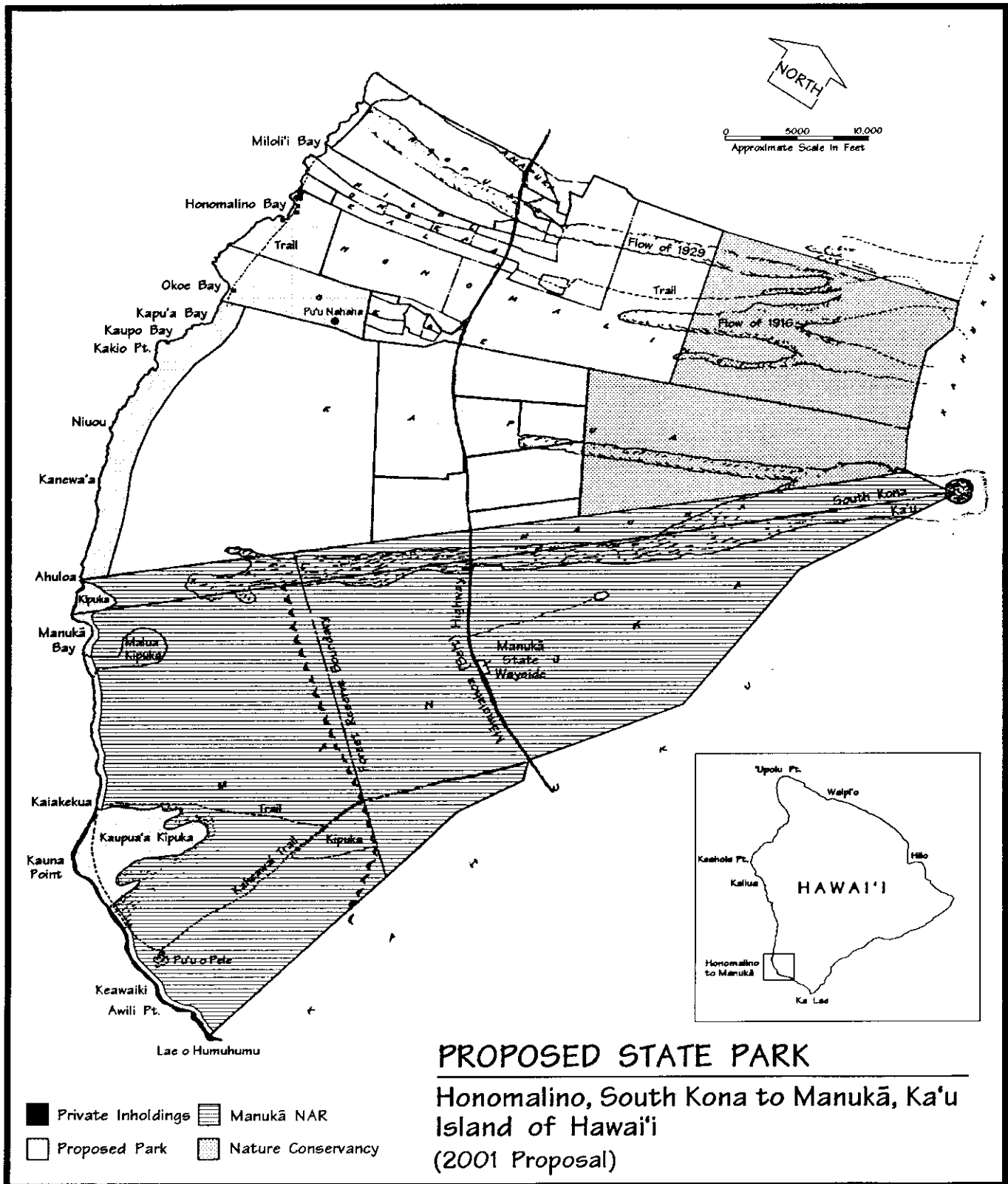
APPENDIX 2: Proposed Park in 1971



MANUKA Natural Area Reserve



APPENDIX 4: Proposed Park in 2001



APPENDIX 5

The Department staff has observed a heavy public use of the Manukā NAR by fishermen and hikers. The lack of public facilities has adversely impacted the anchialine ponds as fishermen and hikers use the ponds for toilets, and trash and litter are left behind in areas along the shoreline where they camp and recreate. Archaeological and cultural sites are being degraded and there is clearly a need for controlled access and management of the area.

The residents of Miloli'i are primarily concerned about the depletion of the marine resources. Historically and traditionally, 'opelu has been the fish sought by these fishermen and throughout the years, they have seen a major decrease in the supply.

To address this issue, they will be working with Dr. William Walsh, the Aquatic Biologist with the Division of Aquatic Resources to set up rules regarding fishing seasons, fish lengths, restricting the taking of reef fish for aquarium collections, and creating a *kapu* system on gill netting to replenish fishing areas.

In the Manukā NAR, the current problems are control of fountain grass, preserving the anchialine ponds, protection of rare plants in the mauka sections, and cleaning up trash. Since improvements were made to Kaulanamauna Road by NARS, there is an increase in fishermen, people camping, and others accessing the area, especially at the end of the Road to the Sea and Smoking Rock, two very popular fishing spots. A NAR designation offers the highest protection of the natural resources, but may not be the way to go as camping is prohibited in a NAR.

Concerns expressed by Glenn Taguchi, Hawaii District Parks Superintendent were regarding the public's expectations when an area is designated as a park. Any expanded use of the area will require the provision of basic sanitation facilities, such as self-composting toilets and trash receptacles. Any park designation will mean additional costs in manpower, time, and equipment.